

Ferns of the Tropics, by Wee Yeow Chin. 1998. Timber Press, 133 S. W. Second Ave., Suite 450, Portland, OR 97204. 190 pp. Hardcover (ISBN 0-88192-458-X) \$34.95 plus shipping and handling.

Dr. Wee, recently retired from National University of Singapore, has long been involved in nature conservation and nature education. This work continues his efforts to provide popular books on the flora of Southeast Asia. The first half of the book is an in-depth (85 pp.) introduction to ferns and fern allies: general morphology, life cycles, economic uses, propagation, cultivation, habitats, folklore, and superstitions. The second half (105 pp.) is the species section that presents a carefully selected cross-section of fern diversity in the Southeast Asian tropics. Seventy-seven species are arranged alphabetically by genus, with brief descriptions of morphological characteristics, habitat, habit, and cultivation requirements. The work is supplemented with a glossary, bibliography, index to common and scientific names, and most importantly to new fern fanciers, fern society addresses, e-mail addresses, and websites. The text is lean and simply written. It supplements the numerous gorgeous color photos that will make any reader a fern fanatic. There is a good mix of close-ups, habitat and habit shots, and stunning full page photos that emphasize the incredible form diversity of ferns in the tropics. This slim volume packs a lot of the tropics into a small space, and it will captivate any reader in temperate regions.—JAMES H. PECK, Department of Biology, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2801 S. University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204.